$2

MARCH 6, 2026 | VOLUME 17 | ISSUE 6

YOUR PURCHASE BENEFITS THE VENDORS.
PLEASE BUY ONLY FROM BADGED VENDORS.

Rev. Jesse Jackson, iconic civil rights activist, founder of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, has passed on. **page 10**

MEET YOUR VENDOR: **TODD JOHNSON** PAGE 3

GROUNDCOVER 15

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church rolls out the red carpet for the rotating shelter.

page 6

St. Nicholas Church volunteers hosted and staffed the men's winter shelter. Rotating host sites provide shelter, food, warmth and other indoor activities for the men for one week.

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM

venmo

@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Vendors are the main contributors to the paper, and are compensated to write and report.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

International Network of Street Papers

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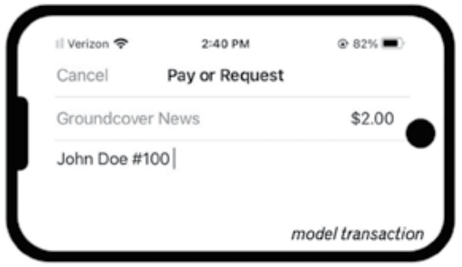

Make sure to include name and vendor number before clicking "Pay." Money goes directly to vendors *only* if attributed correctly.

If Groundcover vendors have a personal Venmo (or offer other cashless payment options), we encourage them to use those accounts instead of the Groundcover News account. **We value economic autonomy and want all paper sales income to go directly to vendors as soon as possibe.** Thank you!

SCAN TO WATCH A VIDEO ON HOW IT WORKS!

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WAYS TO SUPPORT

1. **Buy the paper, read the paper.**
2. **Get the word out** — We rely on grassroots marketing. Talk to people about Groundcover and share us with your network.
3. **Volunteer** — You'll learn a lot about our vendors, the newspaper and your community. Interested in volunteering regularly? Fill out the form on our website.
4. **Advertise** your company, organization, event or resource — see rates below.
5. **Follow us on Facebook and Instagram** — promote our posts and share your favorite articles and vendor interactions.
6. **Donate items** — A seasonally appropriate list of items most needed at our office and on the street is available on our website. Drop off anytime we're open.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES for one month

Size	Black/White	Color	Dimensions (W x H in inches)
1/8	$110.00	$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5
1/6	$145.00	$200.00	5 X 4
1/4	$200.00	$265.00	5 X 6.25
1/2	$375.00	$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
full page	$660.00	$900.00	10.25 X 13

PACKAGE PRICING
Three Months/Six Issues: **15%** off
Six Months/Twelve Issues: **25%** off
Full Year/Twenty six Issues: **35%** off
Only run for two weeks/one issue: **40%** off
Additional **20%** discount for money saving coupons

MEET YOUR VENDOR

Todd Johnson, vendor No. 689

In one sentence, who are you?
I'm someone who loves people.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover News? 4th Ave and Liberty St. — the Dunkin' corner.

What is your favorite thing to do in Ann Arbor? Watch how everyone is living their lives!

What words do you live by?
Honesty and respect.

What's something about you that someone on the street wouldn't know?
I'm a great cook.

What motivates you to work hard selling Groundcover News?
I know it helps with homeless issues.

What's the best way to start the day?
Praying and thanking God for all he's done.

What is a small thing that makes your day better? Someone smiling even when they are going through something.

Thank you for walking with me

DAVID MITCHELL
Groundcover vendor No. 661

In 2023 I suffered a severe injury to my spine. The injury was so severe that I was prepped for emergency back surgery at the University of Michigan Medical Center. While waiting in the emergency room, I was moved with fear, my only thoughts being how I would live the rest of my life in a wheelchair or lying in a bed in a vegetative state. When my surgeon and nurse walked out of my room, an inner voice said, "Get up, and get out of the hospital." Without hesitation I stepped up behind my wheelchair and made my way past security to the parking lot where I pulled myself up into my truck and drove away. This was a turning point in my life. That still, small voice guided me to the Robert J. Delonis Center, the only place I could turn to after being physically unable to work and with no place to stay.

I was given a cane to support myself as I learned to walk again step-by-step, with great pain. I was awarded a scholarship to the Ann Arbor YMCA where I participated in swimming twice a day. I felt much less pain while swimming and, after several months, I developed a healthy routine with 45 minutes in the morning, and 45 minutes in the afternoon. The rigorous exercise strengthened the muscles around my spine, and now I am able to walk without a cane, and even ride a bicycle.

Though I still experience a little pain, I am eternally grateful for the great fear and that voice that moved me to avoid back surgery and walk by faith.

The three-year period of ongoing recovery was not easy and continues to this very day.

Along my road to recovery, I have a long list of organizations and individuals to thank as many of them literally carried me when I could not walk for myself. I want to thank the staff at Delonis for their unconditional love, acceptance and support. I want to thank the staff at the YMCA for their patience and for giving me the freedom to heal without judgment. I want to thank the Ann Arbor Police and Fire Departments for literally picking me up off the street when I could no longer move or had fallen down in pain. And finally I want to thank the men and women of Huron Valley Ambulance for getting me up, stabilizing and transporting me to the safety of a hospital.

Now I live in Ypsilanti and have the privilege of giving honor to those who have helped me get back on my feet. In the weeks to come, I will give our readers a closer look into the history and inner workings of our first responders here in Washtenaw County. You will read about the brave individuals who have made a commitment to caring for those among us who can not take care of ourselves. Look for these in upcoming issues of Groundcover News.

I love St. Patrick's Day!

DENISE SHEARER
Groundcover vendor No. 485

St. Patrick's Day is a very special holiday to me. It is special for a lot of different reasons. It is special because it is a Christian holiday and it is special because it is a beautiful and fun holiday. It is beautiful because green is one of my favorite colors. I love corned beef and mint ice cream. It is festive and fun. St. Patrick's Day is a friendly holiday, too. I like Irish music; it is relaxing and fun. I like mint ice cream all year round, but St. Patrick's Day is more of a reason to have it.

Corned beef hash is one of my favorite breakfast foods. I have a recipe, too. My famous corned beef stew. I like to put corned beef and carrots and mushrooms mixed with cream of mushroom soup and add a little garlic powder and seasoning salt and the stew is made! That's one of my famous St. Patrick's Day meals. Another recipe is my favorite sandwich — a corned beef sandwich on wheat bread. On both slices of bread, put Thousand Island dressing, plenty of corned beef, tomato and spinach. Cut it in half and enjoy!

St. Patrick's Day is a good day to relax, wear and enjoy the color green, and celebrate the color green and praise Jesus. It is one of the most fun holidays of the winter!

WORD SEARCH

by Emeri Jade Bey

The Luck of the Irish

R	E	I	M	N	R	R	A	I	N	B	O	W	B
S	N	E	M	C	N	C	T	W	W	E	R	R	K
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C	P	R	L	N	L	H	T	R	H	L	N	E	C
O	E	L	C	B	A	D	E	S	E	I	D	G	H
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CELEBRATE
IRELAND
RAINBOW
COINS
LUCKY
GOLD
MARCH
LEPRECHAUN
SHAMROCK
KILT
GREEN
CELTIC

community **EVENTS**

RIVERSIDE SWINGS
Friday, March 6, 9-11 p.m. Riverside arts center. 76 N. Huron St., Ypsi. *Swing dancing every Friday to recorded music. No partner or experience required. Wear comfortable low-grip|tread shoes. Preceded at 7 and 8 p.m. by hour-long lessons. Followed by a "late-night blues-&-fusion" dance. The 1st Friday of each month is free, and the 3rd Friday includes a Charleston lesson.*

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BENEFIT SHOW
Saturday, March 7, 5-8 p.m., LIVE nightclub 102 S. First Ave. Ann Arbor. *Performances by Maddy Ringo, SK Rodriguez, Me Again Medicine Show, Juniper, Kira Blue and Michele Smolarski. Benefit show for Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.*

ANNUAL ADULTS SKATE TOO EXHIBITION
Sunday, March 8, 12:45 -1:35 p.m., Ann Arbor Ice Club, 2121 Oak Valley. *Local adult skaters of all levels show off their skills in free-style, dance and showcase skating. Presented by the Ann Arbor Figure Skating Club.*

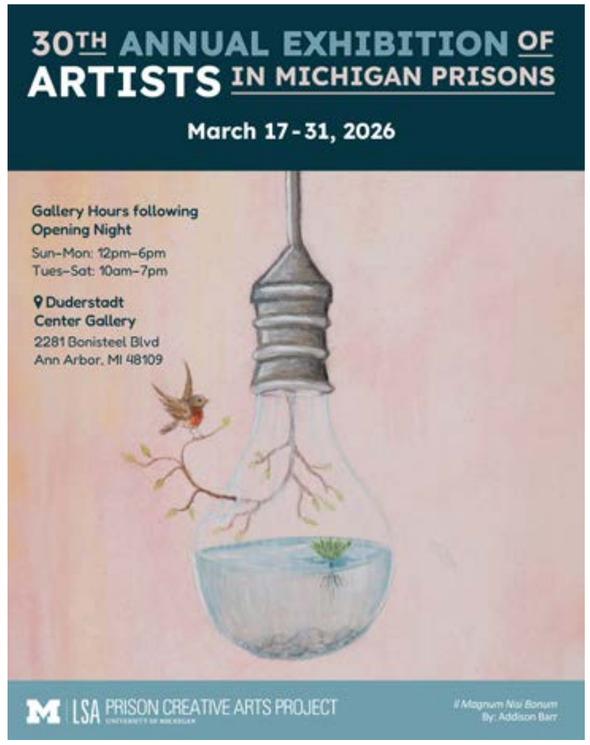
WONDER WALKS
Matthaei Botanical Gardens lobby, 1800 N Dixboro Rd. Ann Arbor.
Sunday, March 8, 1 p.m., "Signs for Spring." *Walk to look for signs of thaw and birds returning.*
Wednesday March 18, 5 p.m. "Beaver Tales and Co-existence." *Learn about how beavers have shaped local history and see changes in Matthaei since a family of beavers took up residence in 2023.*

OSCARS PREVIEW
Wednesday, March 11, 6-7:30 p.m., AADL downtown, lower level program room. *Attention all film fans! Join movie buffs Nick Alderink (Cinema Program Director at the Michigan Theater), Tara Calligan (Marketing Director at the Michigan Theater), Erica Gleichman (Head Projectionist at the Michigan Theater) and Martin Bandyke (host of Fine Tuning on Ann Arbor's 107one) as they discuss who will win and who should win Oscars at the 98th Academy Awards. This Oscars preview event will include lots of movie clips and audience participation.*

SAFFRON KINGDOM SCREENING
Thursday, March 12, 6-9 p.m., Rackham Auditorium 915 E Washington St., Ann Arbor. *Screening of Saffron Kingdom, an exploration of the impacts of the Kashmir conflict, told through the journey of a family from Srinagar to Atlanta, highlighting themes of trauma, identity and resilience. Followed by Q+A with director Arfat Sheikh. Presented by United Asian American Organizations and Daffodil Productions.*

2026 ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT
Friday, March 13, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Washtenaw Community College Morris Lawrence Building, 4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor
This summit is designed to connect entrepreneurs and small business owners at any stage with the resources to help them grow their business successfully. This year's event will include a government panel, a resource fair, presentations, multiple breakout growth lab offerings, and time dedicated to networking. If you plan to attend, please register here: bit.ly/4qjCMVp

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 734-665-6149
Bethlehem-ucc.org facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2
Bethlehem Church is home of the Groundcover office
UNITED in Christ JUST
MARCH 2026 EVENTS AT BETHLEHEM
Please visit the church website at:
www.bethlehem-ucc.org for the most up-to-date calendar and event information.
Sunday Worship Time
10:00 am In-person and via Live Stream


30TH ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF ARTISTS IN MICHIGAN PRISONS
March 17 - 31, 2026
Gallery Hours following Opening Night
Sun-Mon: 12pm–6pm
Tues-Sat: 10am–7pm
Duderstadt Center Gallery
2281 Bonisteel Blvd
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
LSA PRISON CREATIVE ARTS PROJECT
Magnum Nisi Bonum
By: Addison Barr

GROUNDCOVER WRITING WORKSHOP: STORY CONSTRUCTION
Friday, March 13, 10 a.m., Groundcover News office. *Sam Killian will be leading a workshop on presenting news stories: leads, hooks, closings and titles. Attend alongside Groundcover vendors and writers.*

BIKE SUMMIT 2026
Sunday, March 15, 11:30 a.m. - 4 p.m., WCC Student Center, 4800 E. Huron River Dr. *All invited to join area bicycle advocates and enthusiasts for speeches and breakout sessions on topics related to improving individual skills and local cycling. Food and drink will be available for purchase.*

POTENTIAL ART SHOW: THE NEUTRAL ZONE
Monday, March 16, 4-6 p.m., The Neutral Zone, 310 E. Washington St. Ann Arbor. *Juried exhibition of art by high school students from across the country. Winning artists will receive cash prizes, scholarships, art supplies and a chance to exhibit at art galleries.*

EMU GEN AI SUMMIT
Monday, March 16, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., EMU Student Center, 900 Oakwood Street, Ypsilanti. *EMU is convening a regional "Gen AI Summit: Learning Together at the Forefront of Change" to bring together community members, educators, professionals, students and more for meaningful dialogue about how generative AI is reshaping our lives, work and learning.*

30TH ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF ART BY MICHIGAN PRISONERS
Tuesday, March 17, 6 p.m., U-M North Campus, Duderstadt Gallery, 2281 Bonisteel Blvd. *The opening reception for this annual exhibit and sale of hundreds of art works by incarcerated residents of 26 state correctional facilities, features talks by U-M PCAP faculty. Artist talks and workshops throughout the week — for complete schedule see* lsa.umich.edu/pcap

AAFF 2026 SCREENING: FIND ONE WHO WAS NOT BORN OF WOMAN THAT ONE IS YOUR FATHER
Wednesday, March 25, 9 p.m., Michigan Theater. *Ann Arbor Film Festival Feature in Competition. Groundcover is community partner org.*

Chinese New Year 2026 celebration at Briarwood Mall: Year of the Horse

I happened to go to the Briarwood Mall on Sunday, Feb. 15, around 10 a.m. just for fun. I love looking at all the fun love decorations for Valentine's Day, the season of love.

What I saw with my own eyes was a truly happy event. The Briarwood Mall was putting on a Chinese New Year celebration. This event blew me out of the water. It was so much fun. This clearly was organized by different local Asian organizations including Ann-Hua Chinese Association. This was a really amazing experience for me and brought back many old memories from growing up in Seattle, Washington — "the Emerald City" and "the Gateway to the Orient."

It was fun to see the mall decorations. The very first event was a mall dance dragon and lion parade with a drill team of drummers. Many people joined in and walked the length of the mall with the golden and red dragon. The atmosphere was of excitement and drumming in the new year. The first image was the very large golden dragon followed by a smaller red dragon clearly carried by kids of all ages. The drumming ladies followed with synchronicity and drill drummings.

The dragons returned and everyone gathered around the open area for the dancers in front of JC Penney with a lady in red who was the announcer for each event and dance. The tiny tots started the event with red streamers and jumping twirls, swaying to the right and left. Then the next age: six-year-olds, with their streamers and fans. The different groups represented different ethnic regions of China and Mongolia, including three different age groups of dance Tai Chi. There was even a traditional Chinese opera ensemble in very elaborate golden costumes.

The dancing went on into the afternoon with golden-agers showing the fun dance of a marriage, pretending to be a young man and woman together with a sprinkle of happy candy pitched into the crowd for the kids who were watching the event on the sidelines.

At the end, people truly felt they had experienced Chinese New Year. And with that, like so many others, I found my way to the Panda Express Chinese food restaurant and ordered chicken barbecue and an egg roll with a yummy drink.

This is the year of the horse. May all the luck of a running horse come to bring much wealth to you and peace to all the world.

CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

Youth performers.

A2 Earth Day events will focus on the elements

EARTH DAY PLANNING COMMITTEE

The mental field upon which and within which we play and work and sweat, dance and dream is limitless! Upon this planet known as Gaia, commonly called Earth, we think — and feel — at times, "We got this."

"She's got us," though, is closer to the truth. Hopefully we do "Got this…" — at least enough of us to formulate the critical mass of Collective Consciousness necessary to keep the scales of justice tilted in the direction of the greater good.

Mental clarity to the greatest degree we can achieve lends to our collective clarity in dealings with each other at various levels, and will lend toward our societal ability to stabilize and improve our relations with all — and with Gaia. Gaia has a mind of her own, of which we are a part. We need her, she ultimately does not need us; fortunately the current conditions at least seem to be giving us the chance to think things through. We (once again?) begin to integrate our thinking, feeling and physical being to summon our emotional fortitude to find our place in the universe, in the ethers therein.

As we humble ourselves in knowing we know-not all the answers, we can be comforted in knowing all-of-the answers are there. These answers are available to us through observation; processing what we observe is possible with mental clarity; mental clarity is available with clearing; clearing is possible through meditation and silence.

Not like the silence in "Silent Spring," as so eloquently expressed by Rachel Carson in her book of that title. Eventually these writings of hers and others led to establishing Earth Day, which we will celebrate in Ann Arbor again — for an entire week this year, April 19-25. This will be in conjunction with a number of activities and events correlating with common concerns we share: Bicycle Day, Hemp Day, Arbor Day and an Earth Day event at the Leslie Science and Nature Center.

Water: the element seemingly most closely related to the mental aspect of our being. Without clear circulation of clean water, our capacity to think clearly is compromised — as, I do believe, is the case with Gaia. This all delves into another dimension of the concept of thinking, which is a process of interrelated functions. Our thinking — and mental clarity — ought to lead us back to compassion, with the water circulating through our veins and her rivers to the heart, to the east and south. The east represents the spiritual aspect of our being, the south the physical, in this framework of distinction addressing these common concerns that we all share. And once we stabilize (as best we can) these aspects, we then are prepared to look into the unknown, represented by the west, and leave the past behind, lending to more space for that clarity.

Earth does this every day as Gaia, kissing the Sun good-night, in all our regions, every hour on the minute in this eternal existence where time as we know it exists-not. We have all of the time in the world, as she sails through the ethers, the universe within which we exist, and think — therefore we are.

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DON'T HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE? We can work with a variety of IDs to get you your card.

Repair Clinic
Thursday | Mar 26 | 10-11:30am | YDL-Michigan
In March, get help mending or sewing. Let us know if you have skills to lend, or things you'd like to see offered at a future repair clinic!

FEATURED EVENT
PHIL HALE QUARTET—
PRESENTED BY THE JAZZ FOUNDATION OF AMERICA
Saturday | Mar 28 | 2-3pm
YDL-Superior
YDL welcomes the Phil Hale Jazz Quartet, featuring Phil Hale on keys, John Douglas on trumpet, John Barron on bass, and Djallo Djakate on drums. Their focus is on playing modern takes on standard jazz with a strong swing twist.

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church rolls out the red carpet for the men's rotating shelter

JOE WOODS
Groundcover vendor No. 103

Dear members of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude and to commend you for the incredible hospitality you provided during your recent time serving as a site for the men's rotating shelter. While Michigan winters are notoriously brutal — especially for those in our community without a permanent home — the warmth and care I witnessed at your church were truly exceptional.

Having spent time at other local organizations like St. Francis and Bethlehem United Church of Christ, I have seen many groups do great work. However, my first interaction with St. Nick Greek Orthodox Church left a lasting impression. I typically feel uncomfortable in new environments, but your members made me feel completely at ease. I was amazed to see everyone treated with the level of service you would expect from a five-star hotel. From the homemade spaghetti and Mexican-style burritos to the "Greek Thursday" gyros and custom-made omelets, the effort put into every meal was extraordinary.

And I forgot to mention that they had a foosball table! People were playing chess, board games, and the U-M street medicine team came.

I initially became involved through my friend and church member, Ben Curtis, and I am so glad I had the opportunity to witness your mission first-hand. It is clear that your service comes from a place of genuine love and a desire to help. I wanted to personally thank Father Nick and the members of the church.

I want to give the congregation "10 stars" for a spectacular first-time impression. Thank you for your kindness, your generosity and for the dignity you showed to everyone who walked through your doors.

Sincerely, Joe Woods

Top left: **Volunteers serving a homemade dinner.** Top right: **The Church provided abundant hygeine supplies and winter gear for guests to take.** Bottom: **Church volunteers. Fr. Nick pictured center.**

Building a better understanding of trauma, mental health for men

ANDREW
Changing the Narrative Series

In late summer 2016, I was on my way home from work when I got a phone call from my sister. I could sense that there was something wrong from the tone in her voice — she was about to tell me that my mum had cancer.

The news was terrible, but I already had a gut feeling that everything was going to change for me and our family. It was a bad, bad time — my sister Kirsty also found out that she had cancer, and three of my best friends passed away during that period.

I ended up splitting up with my then-partner and moved back to Cardiff, where I'm from originally. I thought everything was going okay for me, but eventually I began to realize that things were far from fine as my drinking got increasingly out of hand. I was drinking heavily to hide the pain I was in. After a year of uncertainty and turmoil, I decided that I needed to leave Cardiff. I wanted to have a break from everyone to try to sort myself out, so I went to London to stay with some friends. Staying with them long term wasn't possible, so I found a homeless charity and we talked over my options. After talking to me about why I ended up homeless, they put in contact with a homeless charity called Emmaus in Gloucestershire.

Emmaus asked me to come and visit, which I willingly did. While there, I was offered and accepted a place with them in their supported accommodation. It was time of change. While all of this was going on, I found out that my brother and sister had reported me as missing. I'd come off social media and didn't realise they were so worried.

I was also suffering with my mental health at the time, problems that I knew were getting worse, but I just could not admit that I needed to get help. Once again, I felt that if I moved on, it might help.

So, in 2019, I decided to ask Emmaus if they had any places in Scotland, and they did, so I moved north. While I was at Glasgow Emmaus, I started to receive cognitive behavioural therapy to get some support for my mental health, and that helped a lot.

Things were more positive at that time, and that helped me make the decision, just before my 50th birthday, to reconnect with my family after being away from them for so long. I even decided to move back to Emmaus Wales to be near my family, and to try to settle down and have a normal life. But truthfully, at the back of my mind, I knew I still wasn't right. I still found it hard to try to deal with my pain, partly because no-one knew how I was really feeling. And no-one knew because I found it hard to talk about my feelings; even talking to my family was difficult.

Fast forward to 2024, and once again I was finding it very hard to cope with everything because of how I was feeling. Living in a shared house was not helping, Sso once again I packed a bag and headed back to London. I wasn't sure what I was doing or why I was doing it because my head was so mixed up. I was trying to deal with a lot of emotions from past traumas that I had never really talked to anyone about. I found it very hard to talk about how some experiences had affected me over the years, and how they had affected my family. I had never really talked about what I had been through.

But at last, I'm beginning to talk. I'm back in Glasgow, and I've been able to get more counselling, which is helping me understand and process what I have been through. For the first time, I've been able to talk about being abused as a child. I've begun to understand that the trauma caused by that abuse is what has affected my mental health so badly over the years. I realize now that I've been wearing a mask for so many years; a mask that I put on to present myself as a happy-go-lucky guy just going through life, when the reality was that I was falling apart.

The counselling I'm having now is giving me a better understanding of how I've managed to survive everything I've been through. My hope for the future is to try to help others by sharing my own experiences — maybe that might encourage a better understanding of what mental health means to other men.

Courtesy of INSP.ngo

Labor unions and Labor Notes Conference 2026

Unions have a long, proud and often contentious history in Michigan, from the Flint sit-down strikes that launched the United Auto Workers in the 1930s to the current struggle by Starbucks workers in Washtenaw County to get better wages.

Union membership in America has declined steadily since the 1970s. The share of all U.S. workers who belong to a union or are covered by a union contract has fallen over the past 50-55 years. In 2025, just 11.2% of all workers in the country were covered by a union contract, according to federal data. In the private sector, just 6.8% of workers were covered by a union agreement. This compares to 23-29% covered in 1970.

Unions remain strong in some important areas of the Michigan economy. Recently, the UAW successfully fought to protect the job of Ford Dearborn assembly plant worker TJ Sabula who was suspended after heckling President Donald Trump as he toured the factory.

But many workers face business monopolies that keep workers without competitive pay and little or no healthcare insurance. For example, executives for Starbucks refuse to honor Starbucks employees' decision to form a labor union. Nurses and teachers from all over America are striking, striving to receive the compensation and decency they deserve in today's workforce.

Since 1979, Labor Notes, a media and organizing project, has been the voice of union activists who want to reinvigorate the labor movement. Through their magazine, website, books, conferences and workshops, they promote organizing, aggressive strategies to take on employers, labor-community solidarity and unions that are run by their members.

Labor Notes covers a wide range of labor union and social justice issues. Labor Notes has often focused over the years on the United Auto Workers, which once set the pace for wages and healthcare across many industries. The UAW succeeded in February in winning 20% wage increases for Volkswagen workers in Tennessee and negotiated historic improvements (a 30% wage increase with over $42 per hour at the top end, reinstatement of cost of living increases, and elimination of the wage tier system) for workers at the Detroit automakers in 2023. But the UAW has also been rocked in recent years by corruption scandals.

The 2026 Labor Notes Conference is scheduled for June 12–14, in the Chicago area, at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, Illinois. This major gathering of union activists, reformers and workers will feature over 200 workshops and meetings focused on bargaining, organizing and strengthening the labor movement. The Labor Heritage Foundation's Great Labor Arts Exchange, an annual arts festival that celebrates the history of the labor movement, will be part of the conference events. Registration is now open.

Jane Slaughter, the long-time editor of Labor Notes, now retired, spoke with Groundcover News about the state of labor unions and the challenges workers face.

GCN: Is Labor Notes trying to get more readers outside of the labor movement?

Slaughter: We have been mainly directed at those in the movement, but there are a lot of people that read it that are not involved with unions that support the publication.

GCN: What's the relationship between Labor Notes and big unions, especially the UAW?

Slaughter: That has varied over the years. When Labor Notes got started in 1979, UAW thought we were the worst of the worst because we criticized the union when they didn't do the right thing. Since then some unions have changed leadership from time to time, so we were able to have good relationships with some union leaders like UAW President Shawn Fain.

GCN: That brings me to my next question: Do you feel that UAW President Shawn Fain is more in sync with the Labor Notes viewpoint than his immediate predecessors?

Slaughter: Yes, he spoke at the last conference and was very popular. Shawn Fain is like night and day from UAW presidents in the past. Because those before him who ran the UAW were corrupt, and worthless when it came to standing up for the workers. We at Labor Notes support Shawn Fain wholeheartedly. We believe he is doing a good job as a leader, but the UAW needs a broader base movement, like locals standing up to management on the shop floor. It can't always come from the top. There is a long way to go to make the UAW what it should and can be.

GCN: How do you think workers at Starbucks and Amazon can successfully unionize?

Slaughter: As you know employees have been unionizing several years now, but they still don't have a contract. They started bargaining with Starbuck's management and management refuses to budge on a lot of things that are important to them. Starbucks has 10,000 stores and only 600 stores are unionized, so a strike is not going to have a huge impact. I believe they are doing the right thing striking and trying to get public support, and they are getting public support because it is such a visible brand, but still have a long way to go.

Amazon is a whole 'nother profession, also extremely hard to unionize because management, in the form of owner Jeff Bezos, opposes unionizing. I feel the Teamsters could be doing more because organizing Amazon is absolutely essential for the future of the labor movement. One of the Teamsters' biggest employers is UPS, and Amazon tends to eat UPS's lunch, and

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MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

Published by Labor Notes (2016)

What is a labor union?

A labor union is a group of employees who organize together to collectively bargain with their employer for better wages, benefits, and working conditions, acting as a unified voice to gain more power than individuals have alone. Through democratic processes, members elect leaders to negotiate contracts (collective bargaining agreement) covering pay, hours, safety and job security, ensuring fairer treatment and greater job security.

Brief history of labor unions

The era when workers fought for their rights spans from the late 18th century Industrial Revolution through the Progressive Era (early 20th century) and beyond, with major milestones including early strikes in the 1700s, the formation of national unions like the National Labor Union (1866), and militant actions in the 1880s-90s (Knights of Labor). Landmark legislation like the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938) established minimum wage, overtime and child labor laws. There were ongoing fights for rights in the mid-to-late 20th century, with struggle in the Civil Rights Era (1960s), as seen in the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Strike.

The first U.S. trade union, The Federal Society of Journeyman Cordwainers (shoemakers) was formed in Philadelphia in 1794, marking the start of sustained union organization, though efforts like the 1768 tailors' strike showed earlier worker action. In 1818 the General Union of Trades (Philanthropic Society) formed in Manchester (UK), an early attempt to unite different trades. In 1869 the Knights of Labor were founded, becoming the first significant national labor organization in the United States, recruiting diverse workers.

I spoke at the podium, but was anyone listening?

ELIZABETH "LIT" KURTZ
Groundcover vendor No. 159

While the inhumane realities of people living — and literally dying — on the streets of a college town known for its progressive ideals have become disturbingly normalized, it is difficult to accept the possibility that local government may be normalizing them as well.

Having lived this reality for over a decade, I occupy a rare vantage point from which to speak about the destabilizing experiences of those surviving outside of traditional housing. I was genuinely elated to have the opportunity to present a solution I believed aligned with the City's stated goals of equitability and sustainability.

Survival is my full-time job. That reality afforded me only brief moments and cursory glances at the details of the Planning Commission meeting where the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) would be finalized. I arrived late, unsure whether I would be permitted to speak without having signed up in advance. As I listened to the final round of public commentary, I weighed each remark as it touched on affordability, equitability, sustainability, and dynamic growth.

Shortly before public commentary closed, Chair Wyche asked whether anyone else wished to speak. Though I remained uncertain about certain procedural technicalities, I felt steady as I approached the podium, with the knowledge I was speaking from lived experience.

A daytime stabilization center would not only advance the City's stated goals, but also provide immediate structure and support for residents experiencing housing instability while creating realistic pathways toward employment and long-term housing. Without stability, employment — often the first step toward affordability — remains out of reach.

I used my time at the podium to address the unique needs facing this community. My remarks moved beyond the familiar affordability debate and centered on the foundational need for daytime stability for those locked out of mainstream housing markets.

Yet in the media coverage that followed, there was no mention of my commentary. Even The Michigan Daily, a student-led publication, did not reference or pivot toward the housing instability perspective offered by someone directly experiencing it. The omission is notable. Student journalism often presents itself as attentive to emerging and underrepresented viewpoints, yet this firsthand account of housing instability did not enter the public narrative.

If I am being honest, that silence left a lingering sense that I did not fully belong in that space. Prior to my remarks, Chair Wyche offered an explanation of the meeting's purpose that reflected a subtle institutional paternalism — a dynamic in which individuals experiencing homelessness are perceived as needing instruction and guidance rather than being equal participants.

In a city where homelessness remains an ever-present crisis in our midst, it was mentioned only three times across the entirety of public commentary spanning all three meetings on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. That scarcity — compounded by the absence of media acknowledgment — suggests not

see **PODIUM** next page ➡

The plan behind the plan

AYAT SOHOUBAH
U-M student contributor

At its February 2 meeting, the Ann Arbor City Council approved the first reading of a 30-year renewal and expansion of the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

The vote extends the DDA's tax capture authority through 2055, expands its district northward, and removes a 3.5% annual cap on how much its revenue can grow.

While much of the public debate in Ann Arbor centers on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), this decision focuses on a less visible issue: who controls the tax revenue generated by that growth.

The CLUP sets the city's long-term vision. It shapes where housing can be built, how dense downtowns become, and which transit and infrastructure investments are prioritized. When development increases property values, property tax revenue increases as well.

That increase is captured by the DDA through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF does not raise taxes. Instead, it captures the growth in tax revenue within a defined district and reinvests it in that same district. According to the DDA, TIF funds capital improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, utilities and parks, as well as support for affordable housing.

In 2025, the DDA collected $5.2 million that would have otherwise gone directly to the city. Washtenaw County lost over $2.2 million to DDA capture that same year. Those funds could have supported county services, including mental health, public safety and social services.

Under the current structure, DDA revenue growth is capped at 3.5% annually. The proposed renewal would remove that cap and replace it with a "gainshare" model, allowing the DDA to capture 70% of tax growth while returning 30% to other taxing entities. The plan would extend this structure for another 30 years.

Public comments at the meeting reflected sharp divisions.

Supporters highlighted infrastructure improvements, transit investments, and most notably, housing support. The Ann Arbor Housing Commission said the expansion would enable improvements to housing properties.

Critics questioned oversight and long-term financial trade-offs, arguing that diverting funds from the county creates a "zero-sum game." Despite these concerns, the council approved the renewal and expansion unanimously at first reading.

The timing wasn't coincidental. The DDA renewal occurred alongside votes to rezone parcels at Fifth and Madison for a 14-story development and to approve a $370 million Brownfield TIF plan for Arbor South, another mechanism to redirect future tax revenue.

Taken together, these decisions show how Ann Arbor's growth strategy is structured. The Comprehensive Plan shapes where development happens. TIF determines how the financial gains from that development are distributed. Together, they shape both the physical and financial future of downtown.

The DDA renewal will return to council for second reading in April, after a 60-day window in which other taxing jurisdictions may opt out. As the city continues revising its Comprehensive Plan, public participation matters. The Planning Commission held a second public hearing on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan on February 18. The public hearing lasted for over four hours, with 56 residents expressing their thoughts both in person and online. In a unanimous decision, the planning commission voted to adopt the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

The Ann Arbor City Council will hold another public hearing and vote on the TIF plan March 2. Then, on Monday, April 20, the City Council will hold the second reading and final vote on the ordinance renewing and expanding the DDA's Development and TIF Plan. Both meetings include opportunities for public comment, so let your voice be heard.

Editor's note: The American Association of University Women are hosting an event on Wednesday, March 18, 12:30 p.m. at the Ann Arbor City Club (1830 Washtenaw Ave.) on Ann Arbor's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The Ann Arbor Economic Development Corporation and Equitable Ann Arbor Land Trust board member Brian R. Chambers will be discussing the current land use plan and challenges of achieving housing affordability, sustainability and equity.

Mich. athletes represent in 2026 Winter Olympics

KEVIN KINCHEN
Groundcover vendor No. 691

For those of us who know Michigan as the "Water-Winter Wonderland," it is only befitting that the Great Lakes State be granted at least a small stake, a minute share, a morsel, of Winter Olympic glory in the aftermath of the recent 2026 Milan Cortina Winter Olympic Games.

Men's Hockey

Did you know that all four overtime skaters for the United States men's hockey team, in their dramatic victory against Canada, are native Michiganders? Technically.

Dylan Larkin, Zach Werenski and Connor Hellebuyck were born and bred here in Michigan (Waterford, Gross Pointe and Commerce, respectively). Golden goal scoring hero Jack Hughes was born in Orlando, Florida. However, he moved to Michigan at the age of 14 to play for the U.S. National Team Development Program based in Plymouth. It was this move that allowed him to join forces with Werenski, Larkin, and Hellebuyck as part of the Belle Tire Hockey Club in Detroit. Unbeknownst to them, they began weaving the tapestry of a destined return to glory for United States hockey that even Nostradamus didn't see coming.

It just so happens that the day on which the men's hockey team won gold for the first time in 46 years, was the 46-year anniversary — to the date (February 22, 1980) — of the "Miracle on Ice" in Lake Placid, New York. This is the famed game in which a group of amateur ranked college kids — with dim prospects of making it into the NHL — beat the indomitable Soviet Union team, four goals to three. In the stands and in the broadcast booth, spectators were left to shout, "Do you believe in miracles!!!?"

Just two weeks prior the Soviets had literally crushed United States in an exhibition inside Madison Square Garden by a score that read: USSR 10 USA 3.

The event was so inspiring towards national striving and patriotism for the next generation of skaters that it eventually made its way to the silver screen as "Miracle" (2004).

Figure Skating

Ann Arbor-born Ice Dance figure skater Evan Bates, alongside his lovely wife Madison Chock, ensured just that with a series of riveting performances in the Individual Ice Dance event. Evan graduated from Huron High School and holds a degree from the University of Michigan in Organizational Studies. Madison is a talented and beautiful Hawaiian, Chinese, German, Irish, French and Dutch heritaged California native.

Their showings in both the rhythm dance and free dance were nothing short of poetry on ice. A balletic opera performed with speed, precision, agility and synchrony that supercedes even the actors in a play by William Shakespeare. Dancing to "Paint it Black," they were majestic; they could slide, glide and soar. They waltzed, tangoed and paso dobled across the ice with Chock the miniature matador and Bates the towering bull.

Skating second-to-last in the final event, they temporarily seized the best score of the skate (134.67) before the final skaters, France's Guillaume Cizeron and Lauren Fournier Beaudry, posted a 135.64 to bring their score for the dances combined to 225.82, edging our flag-bearing protagonists by 1.43 total points for the Gold. The scoring came with much controversy as the judge from France is considered to have given an inordinately high score to their home team. Some have gone as far as to say Chock and Bates were hands-down the best team, and that they were cheated out of Gold.

After skating together for 15 years and four Olympics this is their first individual medal. They have Olympic team medal (including one on Feb. 8 of these games), as well as medals in World Championships, Grand Prix Final, World Team Trophy and World Junior Championship.

Full disclosure, I had no idea that I could gain so much enjoyment out of watching figure skating. Now, Chock and Bates are the envy of the world. As it turns out, Milano Ice Skating Arena in Italy was a place in the world where true love was alive, moving, grooving, and oh so soothing. At least, that's the picture the most decorated United States dance ice skate team in history painted on the world stage, with their Olympic experience culminating in a Silver medal on February 11, 2026.

Flagbearers Hilary Knight and Evan Bates of the United States in the parade of athletes during the closing ceremony. Milano Cortina 2026 Olympics. Verona Olympic Arena, Verona, Italy. REUTERS/Guglielmo Mangiapane

Madison Chock and Evan Bates of the United States perform during the Exhibition Gala. Milano Cortina 2026 Olympics, Figure Skating. Milano Ice Skating Arena, Milan, Italy. REUTERS/Claudia Greco

➡ **PODIUM** from last page

merely oversight, but a troubling normalization of a crisis that has lingered far too long and continues with no visible slowing in sight.

From a Comprehensive Land Use Plan standpoint, the City's promise of inclusion began to feel more symbolic than substantive. The plan speaks of broad participation, yet the lack of recognition for voices grounded in firsthand reality — particularly those navigating housing instability — raises important questions about how equitability is actually practiced.

It did not feel like a simple oversight, but rather a continuation of longstanding planning habits that have historically kept unhoused residents outside of infrastructure conversations. I found myself wondering whether my perspective was overlooked because it came directly from lived experience rather than from an organization or credentialed representative considered more formally recognized within the planning process.

When planning processes lean more heavily toward institutional authority than real-world insight, the goals of sustainability, dynamic community growth, and equity risk becoming aspirational language rather than measurable practice.

Still, whether or not my remarks were acknowledged by the media, the public record reflects that I was present and that I spoke. That fact alone affirms a larger truth: unhoused residents are not peripheral to the city's future. We are part of its infrastructure, and we deserve a place in shaping its design.

Rev. Jesse Jackson, iconic civil rights activist, founder of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, has passed on

WILL SHAKESPEARE
Groundcover vendor No. 258

Jesse Jackson pictured left of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the Memphis Lorraine Motel on the day of King's assassination.

On Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2026, the nation woke up to hear that Reverend Jesse Jackson had died during the early morning hours. He was born on October 8, 1941, in the town of Greenville, South Carolina. He was 84 years old when he passed on.

His name at birth was Jesse Louis Burns. Jackson's mother was an 18-year-old high school student and his father was a 33-year-old neighbor who was married at the time. The father's name was Noah Louis Robinson. Historians say that a year later after his birth, Jesse's mom got married to a man named Charles Henry Jackson. He was a post office maintenance worker with a stable job and income. He later adopted Jesse who took his surname and became known as Jesse Jackson. Historians and some biographers said that Reverend Jackson maintained close relationships with his real dad and his stepdad. He did refer to them as his fathers.

Jackson attended racially segregated schools in South Carolina and his family and community lived under the Jim Crow segregation system. He attended the all-black segregated high school in Greenville called Sterling High School. He excelled in academics and sports. He stood out as a good baseball player, basketball player and football player. In 1960, he was recruited to attend The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on a football scholarship. He stayed for two semesters and later transferred to the predominantly Black North Carolina A&T University at Greenboro. After his graduation, he travelled to Chicago Theological Seminary to get his Master's degree.

In 1965, Rev. Jackson left the Seminary to join Rev./Dr. Martin Luther King and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference members to make the long march from Selma to Montgomery. Dr. King saw his potential for community organizing and mobilization, and wanted Rev. Jackson to run "Operation Breadbasket" in Chicago the following year (1966), which he did.

Jackson was a highly energetic civil rights activist. Because of his youthful outlook and shared cultural perspectives, Dr. King and SCLC relied on Jackson to inspire and motivate younger Americans to join the non-violent civil rights movement. In large crowds at a music event or a large Baptist Church congregation, Jackson could be heard shouting in an octane voice, "I am, I am, Somebody!!!" In many events, he might play the role of a preacherman and say, "It gets tough sometimes, it gets dark sometimes, but hold on, hold out, until the morning comes. There will always be joy in the morning!!!" He was able to give an eloquent speech befitting a theatrical performance.

Jackson joined Dr. King during his mass protest on behalf of Memphis sanitation workers who faced unfair labor practices such as wage exploitation and poor working conditions. On the afternoon of April 4, 1968, Dr. King was shot at the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. Rev. Jackson said he was at the first floor parking lot when Dr. King was shot. After King's assasination, there was a leadership vacuum within the Black American population. There were several contests between Jackson and Dr. King's successors at the SCLC. The majority of young Black people such as Rev. Al Sharpton of Brooklyn, New York, wanted Rev. Jackson to be the consensus leader of the Black community during the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and beyond.

The political ambitions and diplomacy of Rev. Jesse Jackson

Dr. King had confided to a few of his civil rights lieutenants that he admired Rev. Jesse Jackson's courage, youth leadership, sense of community and fearlessness. However, he was a little concerned about Jackson's ambition. Eventually, King trusted Jackson enough to explain away any concerns. King was a voracious reader and a reflective practitioner. It is likely he was familiar with author Joseph Conrad's quote from his book "A Personal Record" which was published in 1912. Conrad said, "All ambitions are lawful, except those that trample upon the miseries and credulities of mankind."

Jackson made an ambitious decision to run for the presidency of the United States in 1984. His presidential campaign was nation-wide, unlike the presidential campaign of former congresswoman Shirley Chisolm of New York City. Jackson's 1984 presidential bid was not successful. However, he was known as a trailblazer. He ran again in 1988 to become the presidential nominee of the Democratic Party. He came close to winning the nomination, but eventually he lost to former Massachusetts Governor, Michael Dukakis.

Historians and many members of the legacy mass media considered Jackson's presidential bid a historic national experience. That was the first time a Black person was taken seriously as a presidential candidate. Jackson applied his political strategy of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition — basically, that various people of color should work for change together — in every state in the Union. He won eight states, including Michigan. He was able to change the Democratic presidential rules on awarding delegates during the primary and caucus elections. In the past, the rule was that whoever comes in on top, takes all the delegates. Jackson's petition had the rules changed to proportional awards of delegates based on percentages. Many political analysts have said that change of democratic rules made it possible for Barack Obama's bid for democratic presidential nomination in 2007 and 2008 and, eventually, the Presidency. During the January 2009 presidential inauguration for Obama, Jackson said, "The hands that used to pick cotton, are now picking the president of the United States."

In the world of diplomacy, Jackson traveled to various corners of the globe, trying to help resolve global conflicts. He was a "Special Envoy" for President Bill Clinton. He secured the release of Americans who were held hostage in Bosnia, Syria and other regions of the world. He was right there in South Africa the day that Nelson Mandela was released from prison after spending 27 years in Robben Island detention center.

Jackson was instrumental in the choice of names that Black Americans called themselves in the 1980s and beyond. In the 1960s some Black American leaders such as Dr. King would refer to Black people as "Negroes." Younger generations such as Jesse Jackson and Singer/Performer James Brown preferred "Black Americans." Jackson would address a large crowd with the slogan, "I am, I am, somebody; I am, I am, somebody." James Brown could be heard in concert venues, yelling, "Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud; Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud."

Jackson talked to several Black historians, including former University of Michigan historian and political scientist Dr. Ali Mazrui, about using a name change to link Black Americans to their ancestral home in Africa. Dr. Mazrui had finished the "Lord Reith Lectures" at BBC/Oxford University and wrote the book titled, "The Africans: A Triple Heritage." In the book, Mazrui argued that Irish Americans, Italian Americans, Greek Americans and other ethnic communities take pride in their ancestral origins. Unfortunately, the mass media portray a more negative image of Africa as backward, poor and desolate. In fact the mass media would say, "Forget that you are Africans, remember that you are Blacks." Jackson and some Black intellectuals worked with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to promote the more enduring and historic name, "African-Americans."

One member of OAU provided a 747 jumbo jet to Jackson and his crew to travel to various countries in Africa to announce the name change and the solidarity with the African people. On his way back to the United States. he stopped by London where he received joyous appreciation for his diplomatic leadership.

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I know the Teamsters don't want UPS to go out of business. I believe the Teamsters need to step up their game, and pull more resources when it comes to organizing at Amazon.

GCN: What would be the best strategy for union leaders to convince workers who oppose unions to unionize?

Slaughter: The power of a good example is the best way. If you can show by joining a union you are going to gain a 20% pay increase like the workers at the Volkswagen plant in Tennessee and show other benefits non-union workers don't receive, I believe it is the best demonstration. The union should use workers who have lived experiences as non-union workers, too, and are now union workers, and show the benefits of unionizing. Workers will tend to believe a worker before they believe a paid union rep; plead your case 'worker to worker.'

GCN: I see on the website that Labor Notes is featuring stories of ICE activities in Minneapolis. What are your thoughts on the labor movement and the current Administration's immigration crackdown by identifying, detaining and deporting undocumented immigrants across the United States?

Slaughter: Divide and conquer — they are trying to convince workers who are not immigrants that they have nothing in common with immigrants, but the reality is that all workers, immigrants and non- immigrants, face some of the same challenges in today's work force.

GCN: Do you feel that President Trump is pro-union?

Slaughter: No, he doesn't have a union bone in his body.

GCN: What should we expect at the Labor Notes Conference 2026?

Slaughter: It will be very large. We are expecting around 5,000 people to attend this year. High profile issues will be represented in the labor movement topics like Starbucks and organizing at Amazon. The conference will have two hundred workshops and meetings, and people and organizations from Minneapolis will be in attendance. One thing that always happens at Labor Notes conferences is a lot of networking, and I believe it will be even more so this year. People tend to use this conference to meet face to face with people and different organizations they've been communicating with, but now have the chance to meet for the first time.

Read current and past articles at labornotes.org. *Registration for the annual Labor Notes Conference in Chicago is closed, but you can join the waitlist at* www.labornotes.org/2026

➡ **JACKSON** from last page

The Michigan connection

Governor Whitmer of Michigan ordered that the American flag at the State Capitol in Lansing be flown on half mast as an honor to Jesse Jackson's passing. Jackson had visited Michigan so many times. He launched his 1988 presidential bid at Flint, Michigan. He won the Michigan Presidential caucus which was deemed a historic upset. He brought to the national attention the plight of poor people in Flint and surrounding areas who were suffering under the weight of unsafe and polluted water. He also magnified the knowledge of people around the nation about deindustrialization and what happened to assembly workers when their jobs disappeared. During his presidential campaign, he visited many Michigan counties, including Washtenaw, Wayne, Oakland, Monroe and Livingston. He gave presentations at the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University and local churches.

At U-M, Jackson's presence was felt tremendously. He had helped with labor disputes on the U-M campus. He also helped with negotiations between U-M administrators and student activists. His most notable presence in Ann Arbor was in 1987 when the Black Action Movement III (BAM) did a sit-in at President Shapiro' s Fleming Administration Building. There were incidents of racial tensions, stress and acrimony inside some dorms. Some minority students did not feel safe and welcomed on campus. President Shapiro invited Jackson to Ann Arbor to help the campus heal and calm things down. Jackson met separately with the students and the administrator, and later they met together for an honest negotiation and, of course, conflict resolution. Jackson's presence helped to assuage the distrust between the "warring" parties and put the campus on a better trajectory of interpersonal cooperation, mutual respect and positive communication. A few years before the COVID-19 pandemic, former Ford School Dean and University Provost Susan Collins invited Rev. Jackson to Ann Arbor in order to share his knowledge and life experience with the School of Public Policy students, the University community and the Washtenaw community. More than three thousand people visited Rackham Auditorium to hear Jackson's speech and participate in Q&A. It was a joyful occasion!

Tributes and funeral ceremonies

After Rev Jesse Jackson died on Feb. 17, the Spectrum News of New York listed the following tributes: "You don't drown cause the water is deep. You drown cause you stop kicking. You can never stop kicking, brother Crump. You can never stop kicking,'" said attorney Ben Crump, one of many paying tribute to the civil rights icon.

"Time and again, we knew that hope still lived because Reverend Jesse Jackson kept it alive," Mayor Zohran Mamdani said.

More came from the country's top leaders, saying they were saddened by his death, calling the leader and two-time presidential candidate legendary.

In a social media post, Sen. Charles Schumer said he was a "fearless warrior for justice." He went on to call him "one of the most powerful forces for positive change in our country and in our world."

President Donald Trump also reminisced by posting photos of the two from the 80s on his Truth Social account, and going on to say, "He was a good man with lots of personality, grit and street smarts. He was very gregarious."

Closer to home, New Yorkers paid tribute.

"Somebody who told us to keep hope alive and during this difficult time in history he gave us a blueprint on where we need to go to really keep hope alive," Queens Borough President Donovan Richards said.

Gov. Kathy Hochul said flags would be lowered to half-staff in Jackson's honor. "A nod to a life that's come to an end — and a legacy that lives on," Spectrum News noted.

"Jesse Jackson changed the civil rights movement. He was a consequential and transformative figure," said noted civil rights leader, Rev. Al Sharpton.

"He laid the foundation for my own campaign to he highest office of the land," said President Barack Obama (published by Yahoo News on February 17,2026).

On Feb. 26, the funeral for the late Reverend Jackson started with the movement of his coffin from the funeral home to the headquarters of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition. His family accompanied the entourage and they allowed several minutes for a press conference. Jackson's children spoke and answered questions from the press. One of the memorable answers came from his daughter, who said, "The family always let their father and each other know that they love each other. We try not to go to sleep angry with each other and it is very important to our father that we express love to one another and to him as often as possible."

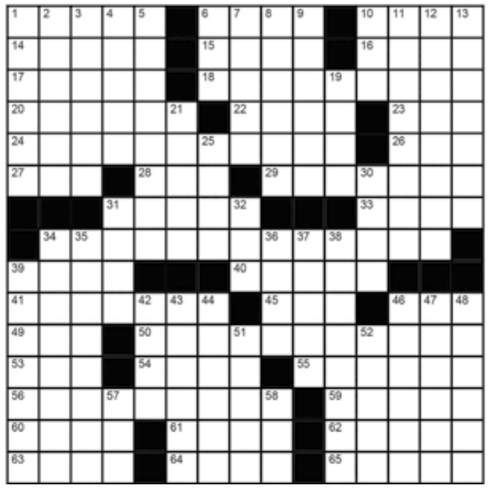
Jackson's casket was moved to South Carolina's State Capitol on March 2. The body will lie in repose at the Capitol's rotunda for mourners to view with respect. Later, the body will be flown to Washington, D.C., to be honored by the public, civic and political leaders. After that, Jackson's body will be flown to South Side Chicago for a final resting place.

Throughout his political campaign and interactions with poor people in Chicago and across the nation, Jackson is known for having said, "KEEP HOPE ALIVE! KEEP HOPE ALIVE!!" R.I.P. Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Jesse Jackson delivering a speech at the 1988 Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

CROSSWORD

International Network of Street Papers



ACROSS
1. Very, in music
6. Scoundrels
10. Atlantic fish
14. Navy ___
15. Alliance
16. A non-American's unit of weight
17. Repeated behavior
18. Follower of the Pentagram
20. Protozoa
22. Papa's partner
23. "___ the season ..."
24. Branch of the United States Armed Forces
26. Australian runner
27. "Star Trek" rank: Abbr.
28. "___, humbug!"
29. Schematic drawing
31. Poison plant
33. Aardvark fare
34. What some might call a place without dissent
39. Oyster's favorite stitch?
40. Come to
41. Progress
45. Anger
46. Finish, with "up"
49. Born, in bios
50. Order including ants, bees, wasps, and sawflies
53. "To ___ is human ..."
54. Carbon compound
55. Have-not
56. They'll get your boat going in a jiffy, but don't ask for gas
59. Manicurist's or carpenter's concern
60. On the safe side, at sea
61. Exec's note
62. Clear, as a disk
63. "Check this out!"
64. Father of Balder
65. Force units

DOWN
1. "That's ___!" ("Too bad!")
2. Deck figure
3. Light weapons?
4. Accused's need
5. City in the headlines for a crackdown on journalism
6. "60 Minutes" network
7. "Remember the ___!"
8. Geezer
9. Seafood dish
10. Schuss, e.g.
11. Water tanks
12. Final
13. Animals known for playing dead
19. Astronaut's insignia
21. Clothes lines
25. Crack, as lips
30. Acquire
31. Aria, e.g.
32. Aviary sound
34. Memorials
35. Solar system models
36. Drops from the sky
37. Canton neighbor
38. Intensified
39. Tree secretion
42. "Beg pardon ..."
43. Go-getter
44. Like salmon, often
46. Highway divider
47. End of a threat
48. Breaks down a sentence
51. Fragrant resin
52. Like some goodbyes
57. Rent
58. Howard of "Happy Days"

Sudoku ★★★★☆☆ 4puz.com

	6					2	3	9
3				2				
		2	9				7	4
					9			1
	9	5	2		7	6	4	
6			4					
2	4				5	9		
				4				8
7	5	3					1	

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS *February 20, 2026 edition*

8	3	5	7	1	4	9	2	6
2	9	4	6	8	5	3	7	1
1	6	7	3	9	2	4	5	8
7	5	9	1	2	6	8	4	3
3	1	2	8	4	7	5	6	9
4	8	6	5	3	9	7	1	2
9	2	8	4	7	1	6	3	5
6	7	3	2	5	8	1	9	4
5	4	1	9	6	3	2	8	7

from the ARCHIVES

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

Gratitude for outpouring of love, money and personal assistance sustaining vendors

SUSAN BECKETT
Pubilsher emeritus

It really does take a village. Historically, Groundcover volunteer staff has been made up primarily of retirees with a sprinkle of college students. With COVID striking, most of the older volunteers had to isolate while college students returned to their parents. Miraculously, a covey of young adults appeared at our doorstep offering help.

They have delivered groceries and money to homebound Groundcover vendors, set up and managed phone plans, made masks, provided tech support for many phones and devices, helped vendors file for the stimulus and unemployment and are now helping us sell papers to our vendors in the outdoor spaces around our office.

Many of our older supporters and volunteers donated all or some of their stimulus checks to help our vendors stay housed and connected when vendors' Groundcover income disappeared in mid-March. Some volunteers transitioned to helping remotely — checking in with vendors weekly and assisting with tax and benefit filing.

Food Gatherers and the Community Action Network supply us weekly with appropriate food to distribute to vendors who are in need. Devoted readers subscribed to our online publication, providing us with cash that we passed on to our vendors weekly. To date, none of the Groundcover vendors have contracted COVID-19. Even though we are again publishing and selling a physical paper, we are continuing some of the supports. Many vendors have underlying health or age conditions that make it especially risky for them to be out. And we never know when the incidence of cases in Washtenaw County might rise to the point where we need to suspend print operations again. (For anyone wondering, you can subscribe to our online edition through our website, groundcovernews.org.)

Even now, we are restricting our sales to the downtown and campus areas of Ann Arbor to avoid the areas where case counts are higher and to allow for better oversight. All vendors are required to go through a COVID orientation that details the safety practices we expect them to follow while selling Groundcover. These include wearing a facemask over the mouth and nose, maintaining a distance of six feet from others whenever possible and frequent hand sanitation. We are also encouraging cashless sales. So don't be surprised if you are offered the option of paying by credit card, Cash App or Venmo!

We give heartfelt thanks to all our donors and our pandemic support staff of Jessi, Glenn, Hailu, Lucy, Michael, Elahe (Eli), Andrea, Tyler, Stephen, Audrey, Matthew, Elizabeth,

$2
MEET YOUR VENDOR: FRED ALLEN, PAGE 3
GROUNDCOVER
NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.
Who are you voting for August 4?
Tony Brown
We talked to the candidates on your ballot. Pages 6-7

Madi, Rainey, Shoshana, Jon, Lisa, Cheryl and Daniel, to our summer intern and layout editor, Lindsay, and to assistant director Michael.

Originally published in the August 2020 edition of Groundcover News.

tax preparation **RESOURCE CORNER**

Tax day is April 15! The IRS is already accepting and processing tax returns; don't wait until the last day!

If your total income is less than $69,000 you likely have one or more cash benefits waiting and tax prep services are at no cost to you. Exact details vary based on the specific tax credit, your tax filing status and the number of people in your household. Some, but not all, tax credits require that you or your children have a Social Security Number.

FINDING TAX FORMS
Ann Arbor District Library branches offer physical copies of various federal tax forms beginning in late January. Librarians can print additional forms for no cost. Call (734) 327-4200 for more information.

Ypsilanti District Library offers tax forms, while supplies last, at the Whittaker and Superior branches. Call the library for more information.
Whittaker branch: (734) 482-4110, x2411
Superior branch: (734) 482-4110, x2431

Download necessary tax forms from the Michigan Department of Treasury website and check income tax refund status.
www.michigan.gov/taxes

FILING HELP
The Housing Bureau for Seniors
Offering FREE tax return preparation for seniors in partnership with AARP Foundation! Appointments are offered Wednesdays and Fridays from February 4 - April 10. Trained volunteers will be able to provide you with a full federal and state return or complete the Michigan Property Tax Credits you qualify for. Past returns can be completed from 2022 onwards. *Call Housing Bureau for Seniors to schedule your appointment at 734-998-9341!*

United Way Southeastern Michigan
Tax preparation services are provided by IRS-certified non-profit partners, Accounting Aid Society and Wayne Metro Community Action Agency. Participation requirements include: make less than $69,000/year, have a Driver's License or picture ID, have a Social Security Card or ITIN, live in Washtenaw County.
Schedule your appointment at unitedwaysem.org/resources/tax-preparation-assistance/

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Offers tax help to individuals with limited income ($57,000.00 or less) and simple tax returns. Call the parish office at (734) 821-2121 to make an appointment to drop off your return. Services offered February through April. Assistance also available in Spanish.

ONLINE FILING
MyFreeTaxes.com
Free online service provided by United Way for preparing and filing your taxes brought to you by United Way. Must make $67,000 per year or less to use this service. Get started today at MyFreeTaxes.com

Jane

DONNA LOMELINO
Groundcover contributor

I didn't like Jane at first.

She didn't seem to care.

She was blunt in a way that made people uncomfortable — sharp, sarcastic, openly irritated by anyone who approached her with practiced concern or polite curiosity. She had no interest in being agreeable, grateful or easy to help.

The first time I spoke to her, she didn't look up. She just said, loud enough for others to hear, "Oh great. Another one."

A few heads turned. Jane didn't flinch. She had long ago stopped performing politeness for people who wouldn't be staying.

When I sat down beside her, she sighed. "What do you want?"

Not: Can I help you?

Not: Who are you?

Just: What do you want?

It wasn't hostility for sport. It was assessment.

Jane used sarcasm the way others use armor. Rudeness kept people at a distance. Intelligence kept her in control. She had learned exactly how to expose fake compassion and deflate people who came in believing they were different.

So she tested me.

Why are you talking to me?

What makes you think you can help?

Oh please — spare me.

Every sentence was a challenge. Every pause dared me to leave.

What I didn't understand then was that Jane wasn't trying to push me away.

She was trying to find out if I would stay.

At the time, I still believed helping meant fixing. I believed kindness would be enough. I didn't yet understand what it meant to sit with someone whose life had taught them not to trust anything that came easily.

One day, after an especially biting comment about "rookies who think they're saviors," something in me shifted.

I didn't snap back.

I didn't defend myself.

I didn't walk away.

I stayed.

Quietly.

Steadily.

She looked at me — real eye contact, for the first time — and said, "Huh. Interesting."

It wasn't praise. But it wasn't dismissal either.

From that day on, small pieces of Jane began to surface through the cracks of her sarcasm. A story here. A memory there. A fear she didn't name outright. Moments of clarity tangled with confusion. Honesty about the voices that sometimes lied to her.

Jane lived with a level of awareness that made her suffering sharper. She knew when her thoughts weren't trustworthy. She knew when reality slipped. That awareness didn't empower her — it haunted her.

And she noticed everything.

One day, she said something that changed the way I understood this work.

"You're not listening like the others," she told me. "You're actually here. You might be good at this … if you don't quit."

It wasn't a compliment. It was a warning.

People had stayed before — briefly.

Then they left.

Jane didn't need promises. She needed consistency.

She taught me that helping people isn't about being liked. It's about being present. About returning the next day after being pushed away the day before. About letting someone challenge your patience without taking it personally.

Jane didn't soften for me.

She didn't become easier.

She didn't change because of me.

I changed because of her.

She forced me to slow down. To listen differently. To understand that the people who push the hardest are often protecting the deepest wounds.

Jane didn't guide me with gentleness or gratitude. She shaped me through resistance — through honesty, through refusal to be managed or minimized.

She didn't just influence my path.

She rerouted it.

And in doing so, she taught me something I would carry into every space that followed:

Before you can help, you have to be willing to stay.

Author's Note: This essay reflects on a past professional relationship. The individual described is deceased, and identifying details have been altered to protect privacy and dignity.

Truth or Lies Mystery Lane: Time Travellers, LLC (part one)

FELICIA WILBERT
Groundcover vendor No. 234

How do I start? Running from the past to the future is often a daunting task. Finding out who committed the crime is even harder. Especially when you have people who think the color of their skin will always protect them. Some don't realize the only way to have peace is to correct your wrongs.

Let's get to it — my name is Armond Councilor, Licensed Private Investigator. I am 28, one of the youngest PI's in the field. I invented a handheld time travel machine that changes into any and everything I need.

Enough about me. On a hot summer day in September, 2034, I was washing my Thunderbird in my driveway. A senior lady approached me and asked, "Aren't you the one who travels? You know, solving unsolved murders and mysteries?"

I thought carefully before answering, "Yes."

"My name is Mrs. AnnaBella Carwell and I need you to straighten out my inheritance," she replied.

I was thinking she was to old to inherit anything.

"I was willed an estate in Alabama 60 years ago. The property was passed down three generations, I was the third owner. During my stay at the property there were several unexplained incidents. I kept hearing crying and voices; the voices would say return our property to our children. I would search the property seeking answers, I only found these items."

Anna handed him an old box with two old faded pictures of twin girls. On the back it read "Lila and Delia;" they were about twenty or younger. The next picture had two Black men and four children posed with the twins. On the back of that picture it read "John, Lila, Delia and Tom."

The children's names were John Jr., Tom Jr., Stella, and Cindy Hitchens. There was an old property deed, Freedom papers for Tom and John, a letter of Will and Testament. It also had two hundred dollars in old money.

"I heard a rumor about the family being hung for their property. That must mean my family had something to do with their demise. Please help me make things right," she said.

Anna handed him the old money saying, "I don't know how much it is worth, but keep it. You may need it."

Armond thought and accepted the assignment. He took the letters and made copies, kept the pictures and placed everything in his briefcase. The next morning he started on his journey by placing his hat on backwards.

It landed him in 1872 at the train station in Birmingham. He walked over to the town. He immediately went to the office of deeds and handed them his Pinkerton Badge.

Armond showed the man behind the desk the deed and asked him who owned the land and estate. He then asked if he could be taken out to the property.

"By the way your name would be Randel McDowel, right?" said Armond.

Randel was nervous, conceding he knew the story behind the change of hands of the property. It was no secret that the Falconer family hung the twins who owned the property.

"They say that he went crazy and hung himself, just last week. The property is deemed to be inherited by his children. The will shall be read in two days," said Randel. "Get us horses now, let's ride out there!"

Upon their arrival, the house was quiet and only the staff was still there. Armond walked up and introduced himself to everyone. He immediately asked questions — who, what, when and where. The butler showed him the spot where they found Mr. Falconer. It was one tree over from the hanging tree of the ladies.

During the questioning of everyone, they all reported Mr. Falconer used to holler out loud "This is my property, I won't leave !" They never saw anyone with him or knew who he was talking with.

To be contuined …

Thank you Groundcover News readers and Truth Or Lies Fans. "The Box," published January 9, 2026, was based on a TRUE story.

Remembering the Girl

MONIQUE CALDWELL
Groundcover contributor

You return to yourself in fragments—
a lesson gathered from every storm,
stitched into the quiet architecture of your name.

The world tried to unmake you,
yet you learned to rise by studying the ruins,
reading the echoes of what once broke you.

You remember the girl who walked through fire
with trembling hands but unshaken will,
who carried questions heavier than truth
and still kept moving.

Now you stand in the light you built,
holding the knowledge carved from trial:
that strength is not the absence of fear,
but the decision to continue anyway;
that identity is reclaimed, not given;
that every scar is a map leading you home.

And home, always, is you.

Complaints

KIMANI HAMILTON
Groundcover vendor No. 518

I choose not
To complain
I choose not to complain
Because it weakens the soul
I choose not to complain
Because I am aware
I choose not to complain because
I know there's truth to all sides
I simply choose not
To complain but to
Learn

Time after time

KIMANI HAMILTON

Time after time
I'm left wondering why
Time after time I'm left
Speechless time after time
I'm left to pick up the
Pieces time after time
I choose to be strong
So time after
Time I listen
So I don't make the
Same mistakes
Time after time

Into thee dark

TERESA BASHAM
Groundcover vendor No. 570

You're ominous & dangerous,
I'm fallin in,
We light a smoke,
A shred of hope,
Don't break this lil heart,
This izz a mystery,
Will it be thee death of me,
What can I do,
I'm alwayz takin that risk,
I just can't resist,
I alwayz bite my lipz,
I feel thee heat,
You're my only desire,
What can I do,
To be close to you,
I feel the rush in my bones,
When we are alwayz alone,
When you pull me in close,
I'm alwayz losing control,
My hertz alwayz on fire,
I fell so deep,
You pull me into thee dark.

WINTER PROGRAM INFORMATION
DAY TIME WARMING SHELTER LOCATIONS:

Location	Address	Dates Available
Ypsilanti Freighthouse (Mon.- Thur., 8am-6pm)	100 Market Place Ypsilanti	Nov. 10, 2025 - March 31, 2026
Delonis Center (Weekends only)	312 W. Huron St. Ann Arbor	Nov. 10, 2025 - April 14, 2026
Lord of Light Lutheran Church	801 S. Forest Ave., Ann Arbor	Dec. 22, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026 EXCEPT DECEMBER 25TH
Ann Arbor Friend's Meeting	1420 Hill St. Ann Arbor	December 25, 2025
St. Mary's Student Parish	331 Thompson St. Ann Arbor	Jan. 5, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2026
First Congregational Church	608 E. Williams St. Ann Arbor	Feb. 2, 2026 - Feb. 13, 2026
First Baptist Church	517 E. Washington St. Ann Arbor	Feb. 16, 2026 - March 27, 2026

All Washtenaw County office building lobbies are available as warming center sites during normal business hours.

Unless otherwise specificed, all above warming shelters operate Monday through Friday during normal business hours. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Delonis Center at **734-662-2829**. For updates, visit **bit.ly/washtenaw-warming**.

WASHTENAW COUNTY MICHIGAN 1826
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Collaborative solutions for a promising future

Last updated: 12/16/25

OVERNIGHT SHELTER INFORMATION

Winter shelter information: Winter daytime and overnight shelter accommodations are available throughout the winter shelter season from **November 10, 2025 - April 14, 2026** for any individual seeking emergency shelter during the cold winter months.

- **Daytime shelter** - Monday - Thursday, 8am - 6pm at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse (100 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198)
- **Overnight shelter** - Nighttime accommodations are at the Delonis Center; 312 W. Huron St., Ann Arbor, and at offsite locations including Congregation partners throughout the County, and there is an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti. During day-time hours, those seeking overnight shelter should first contact HAWC to obtain a referral for shelter at 734-961-1999.

How do I get into the shelter?
Any individuals or families seeking emergency shelter please contact Housing Access of Washtenaw County (HAWC) at 734-961-1999 to obtain a referral to the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (individuals), Alpha House (families), & SafeHouse (survivors). If it is after 5pm or weekend, if you're an individual, please come to or call the Delonis Center (734-662- 2829) and we'll assist serving you. Families, please come to or call Alpha House for assistance anytime at 734-822-0220.

What is provided at the shelter?
Individuals are provided a safe place to sleep each night and can access a wide variety of services including meals, case management, medical care, and most importantly help finding permanent housing.

For updates and more information: bit.ly/washtenaw-warming

Basic vinaigrette dressing

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
Generous 1 tablespoon maple syrup or honey
2 medium cloves garlic, pressed or minced
1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt, or more to taste
Freshly ground black pepper

Directions:
In a liquid measuring cup or bowl, combine all of the ingredients. Stir well with a small whisk or a fork until the ingredients are completely mixed together. Add another pinch or two of salt if desired. Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate for future use. Homemade vinaigrette keeps well for 7 to 10 days.

Struggling to eat 'fresh' during the winter season? During March in Michigan, the following produce is in season and would be delicious additions to most salads, raw or cooked!

- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Parsnips
- Sprouts and microgreens
- Carrots
- Beets

GROUNDCOVER
MEET YOUR VENDOR: TONY SCHOHL
I wish I was a song by you
Poetry Edition submissions due March 23!
POETRY EDITION 2024
POETRY EDITION 2023

Email to submissions@groundcovernews.com or drop off at the Groundcover News office. Accepted poetry will be published in the April 3, 2026 edition. Stay tuned for National Poetry Month open mics and workshops.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
"If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me."
+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)
Come Worship With Us!
Mass Schedule
Saturday 5 pm (English) & 7 pm (Spanish)
Sunday 8:30 am, 10:30 am, 12:30 pm, 5 pm
2250 East Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor
www.StFrancisA2.com 734-821-2100

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THE FUTURE OF ENERGY LIVES HERE.
Ann Arbor is building the energy network of the future: clean, reliable, affordable. The Ann Arbor Sustainable Energy Utility is your voter-approved, opt-in, supplemental utility. We are preparing to provide local solar, battery storage, and networked geothermal energy to residents and businesses. Learn more and sign up now.
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